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RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0066  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1464  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2322  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001593

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION IN "FUSION" TO ELECTIONS FREEZE

REF: A) PORT AU PRINCE 1566 B) PORT AU PRINCE 1546

Classified By: Ambassador Janet Sanderson. Reason: E.O. 12958 1.4 (b)  
, (d)

Summary

1. (C) Officials from 'Fusion,' which otherwise supports President Preval, are strongly opposed to Preval's plan to freeze elections for several years and extend the terms of all Senators to six years. They are still expressing their opposition privately -- both to Embassy officials and to the President directly. They are reluctant to challenge the plan publicly, since the President has yet to publicize the plan, and since they fear that to do so could endanger government unity and overall political stability. President Preval continues to bide his time, saying nothing in public about his grand plan to freeze elections and change the constitution, saying only that he wants elections held under 'good conditions' while his chief prosecutor impugns the integrity of the very election commission that must organize them. End summary.

Fusion Against Election Freeze

2. (C) When Senator Lambert presented this plan to the Ambassador September 21 (ref B); he was accompanied by several Senators, apparently attempting to give the impression that he had the Senate behind him. This appears not to be the case. One of the Senators present, Senator Rudolph Boulos (Fusion, Northeast) told Poloff on September 26 that a majority of senators -- including Senate Vice President Edmonde Supplice Beauzile and several 2-year senators up for reelection -- do not support the Lambert plan. Boulos said he fully supports Senate elections by the end of 2007, and cautioned that Haiti will have a 'parliamentary crisis' if elections are put on hold. He stated that the 'illogical' plan of Senate President Lambert is actually designed to create such a crisis, so that Preval can then more easily change the constitution. Boulos said Preval developed the plan himself and then 'put it in Lambert's head and asked him to move forward with it to test the waters.'

3. (C) The leadership of Fusion, the second largest grouping

in the legislature after the pro-Preval ''Lespwa,'' is taking its case directly to the President but not going public. In a September 27 meeting with PolCouns and Poloff, Fusion Chairman Serge Gilles and Fusion activist Mischa Gaillard said they adamantly opposed the plan of Preval and Lambert to freeze the election cycle and promulgate a new or revised constitution. The plan was based on pretexts that the Provisional Election Commission was corruption-ridden and that its mandate had expired. Both issues could be addressed without shelving elections for years. While the 1987 constitution indeed has many difficulties, it could be amended according to procedures contained in the constitution itself. They had outlined their opposition to this plan directly to President Preval in a September 23 meeting. They claim Preval ''backtracked'' somewhat. When asked why they did not take their party's opposition public, Gilles and Gaillard replied that Haiti's political stability remained fragile.

President Preval: Elections Only Under ''Good Conditions''

14. (U) President Preval has yet to unveil his plan to the public. In a September 25 airport press conference before departing for New York and UNGA, Preval stated his position on elections: they must be held in ''good conditions'' and on the basis of ''consensus'' so that the results are generally accepted as ''legitimate.'' The President said he was engaged in broad ''consultations'' to help bring about this consensus. He referred to ongoing investigations about misuse of funds by certain counselors in the Provisional Electoral Commission (CEP) as a further obstacle to conducting elections soon.

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15. (C) Officials of Lespwa, the electoral grouping that supported Preval in his campaign for the presidency, vigorously support Preval's public position on elections. Anes Lubin of Lespwa's steering committee, in a September 26 meeting with PolCouns and Poloff, echoed the themes of consensus and legitimacy as imperatives that overrode the issue of constitutional deadlines. Accompanied by Mario Coffy and Jenna Joseph of the PLB (Parti Louvri Barye - Party That Opens the Gates, a component party of Fusion) all inveighed passionately against the corruption within the CEP that President Preval had pledged to fight. They also underscored that the mandate of the current CEP had expired. These Lespwa officials argued that the CEP had to be rebuilt so as to adequately reflect the fact that Lespwa was the largest political grouping in Haiti.

Comment

16. (C) Fusion's hesitancy to challenge Preval and Lambert openly arises out of considerations for Fusion's larger political future. Fusion fears that coming out in public against this plan could provoke a rift with Preval and the rest of the government. Haiti has yet to develop a tradition of loyal opposition. Being in the opposition in Haiti means being shut out of influence and power. Fusion wants to remain an influential member of Preval's informal coalition government, and wants Preval to continue to trust them and reach out to them for guidance. Gilles and Gaillard also believe their strategy is working, since Preval allegedly ''backtracked'' in their meeting with him. We have not yet confirmed their belief that Fusion parliamentarians and other major political parties share their view. In any case, President Preval is keeping his grand plan out of the public eye for now. It has yet to leak to the media to any substantial extent.

SANDERSON